

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 SIL-01 LAB-06 AID-20 EB-11

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT BF

SUBJ: DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FNM

BEGIN SUMMARY: RECUPERATING FROM ITS PURGE OF DISSIDENT MEMBERS, THE FREE NATIONAL MOVEMENT (FNM) HAS REELECTED KENDAL ISAACS AS ITS HOUSE LEADER, ATTEMPTED TO REDEFINE ITS PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION, AND BEGUN A DELICATE COURTSHIP OF THE INCREASINGLY VOCAL LABOR MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY

1. KENDAL ISAACS WAS REELECTED AS FNM LEADER IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ON SEPTEMBER 11. ISAACS HAD RESIGNED AS FNM CHIEF AND LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN JUNE, STATING THAT HE FELT HE HAD LOST THE CONFIDENCE OF A "SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER" OF HIS COLLEAGUES. ISAACS' REELECTION FOLLOWED THE DECISION OF THE FNM TO EXPEL THREE OF HIS OPPONENTS, SIR ROLAND SYMONETTE, MICHAEL LIGHTBOURN AND CLEOPHAS ADDERLEY, FROM THE MOVEMENT. SIR ROLAND ANNOUNCED HE WOULD APPEAL HIS EXPULSION, ADDERLEY THAT HE WOULD NOT, WITH NO WORD YET FROM LIGHTBOURN. THE FNM NOW HAS FIVE MEMBERS IN THE HOUSE, COMPARED TO 29 PLP REPRESENTATIVES AND FOUR "INDEPENDENTS" (THE ABOVE THREE PLUS ERRINGTON WATKINS, EXPELLED IN JUNE).

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2. ON SEPTEMBER 14, ISAACS HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE ON A

RANGE OF LOCAL POLITICAL ISSUES. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD DEVOTE HIS EFFORTS TO REBUILDING THE MOVEMENT "AFTER THE PAINFUL EXPERIENCES OF THE PAST MONTHS". HE ANNOUNCED THAT THE FNM WAS WORKING ON AN ECONOMIC BLUEPRINT TO TURN THE DISPIRITED ECONOMY AROUND. ISAACS SAID THAT THE PARTY WOULD CONCENTRATE ON BUILDING GRASSROOTS SUPPORT ON ECONOMIC ISSUES. HE PREDICTED THAT THE SPLINTER VANGUARD NATIONALIST AND SOCIALIST PARTY WOULD GROW SOMEWHAT IN SIZE, SAYING THAT "THEY ARE AVOWED SOCIALISTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ATTRACTED TO THIS PHILOSOPHY, SO ARE SOME OLDER ONES, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE COUNTRY CONTRIBUTE TO THIS". ATTACKING RACIAL AND POLITICAL VICTIMIZATION REPORTEDLY PRACTICED BY PLP LEADERS, ISAACS SAID THAT THE FNM "CONDEMN RACISM WHETHER IT IS BLACK RACISM OR WHITE RACISM, AND WE ARE WILLING TO PAY WHATEVER PRICE IS DEMANDED OF US FOR THAT".

3. COMMENT: FNM SECRETARY GENERAL CLIFFORD COOPER DENIED ON SEPTEMBER 25 THAT THE MOVEMENT WAS BACKING TRADE UNION LEADERS WHO ARE INCREASING THEIR EXPRESSIONS OF OPPOSITION TO THE PLP. AT THE SAME TIME, COOPER SAID THE MOVEMENT "IS BACKING AND WILL CONTINUE TO BACK THE BAHAMIAN WORKERS". THERE HAD BEEN SOME SPECULATION THAT THE FNM WOULD ATTEMPT TO USE THE UNION'S OPPOSITION POTENTIAL, BUT KENDAL ISAACS PROBABLY REFLECTED THE MORE REALISTIC VIEW WHEN HE NOTED THAT THE LABOR LEADERS, WHILE DISILLUSIONED WITH THE PLP, RETAIN THEIR EMOTIONAL AND HISTORICAL TIES TO THAT PARTY. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION AS TO WHO THE "BRAINS" BEHIND SOME OF THE RECENT UNION STATEMENTS MIGHT BE, CONSENSUS APPEARS TO BE EMERGING THAT IT IS NOT ANY OF THE PRESENT FNM LEADERS, BUT RATHER CECIL WALLACE-WHITFIELD, EX-FNM LEADER, SUPPOSEDLY IN RETIREMENT FROM POLITICAL LIFE.

4. THE FNM PLANS TO HOLD ITS NATIONAL CONVENTION IN NASSAU DURING NOVEMBER, ONE MONTH AFTER THE PLP CONVENTION IN FREEPORT.
SPIERS

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